

**THE OAKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Oakland, New Jersey - a learning community committed to excellence*

February 1, 2012

***Dear Parents/Guardians:***

**PRIME LEARNING TIME**

These winter months provide opportunities for prime learning time for students. Our teachers are busy implementing a curriculum that is filled with skills that are essential for students to learn. Please make certain that your children are “ready to learn every day” by being well-rested, well-nourished, and well-prepared, including having homework completed, when they arrive at school every morning. Help your children to understand that the most important work they do is to be *a good student*, and that your family highly values a good education. As parents, your messages are “heard” by your children. Positive encouragement of high achievement and learning can make all of the difference to student mastery of their skills, as well as promote student commitment to schoolwork.

**BASIC SKILL MASTERY**

Together, school and home must form an essential partnership to help students master basic skills. Your help is extremely important in making certain that your children are prepared for higher level study in mathematics and language arts. Often, children believe that their future careers will include professional sports or the entertainment fields; however, they do not grasp that these fields are extremely competitive and success in them is rare. They, also, fail to realize that even in these fields a good education, including college, is necessary.

Basic skills in mathematics are as important as learning the “a, b, c’s.” Assist your children in mastering the multiplication tables, as well as addition and subtraction facts. Mastery of these simple operations are essential to their ability “to do mental math,” and will enable your child to more quickly complete the math problems on timed assessments, including the N.J. ASK, especially because they will not be able to use calculators on many parts of the test. On a timed test, having number facts “at one’s fingertips” is a huge advantage. Use “flash cards,” number games, and technology applications to ensure that your children acquire this learning.

Also, please encourage your children to proofread their written work for spelling and grammar errors. Stress the importance of correct spelling and correct grammar in your home. On the State’s tests, your children will not be able to use “spell check” or grammar check. To do well, they must demonstrate a keen understanding of spelling and grammar rules.

Please remember that basic skill mastery is a lifelong gift. Without this mastery, children will enter high school with a deficit.

**HOMEWORK**

Please help your child be current in school. Check his/her Agenda nightly, and make certain that homework has been completed. Periodically, also, check the web page of your child’s teacher where short and long term assignments will be listed.

**WINTER BREAK**

Winter Break is fast approaching. Schools are closed February 20 through February 24.

**REPORT CARDS**

Second quarter report cards will be mailed to you on February 8. Please review your child’s progress in school. If you have questions, please contact the teacher. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
*Dr. Richard G. Heflich*  
Superintendent of Schools